

Tagata Sa'ilimalo Strategic Framework





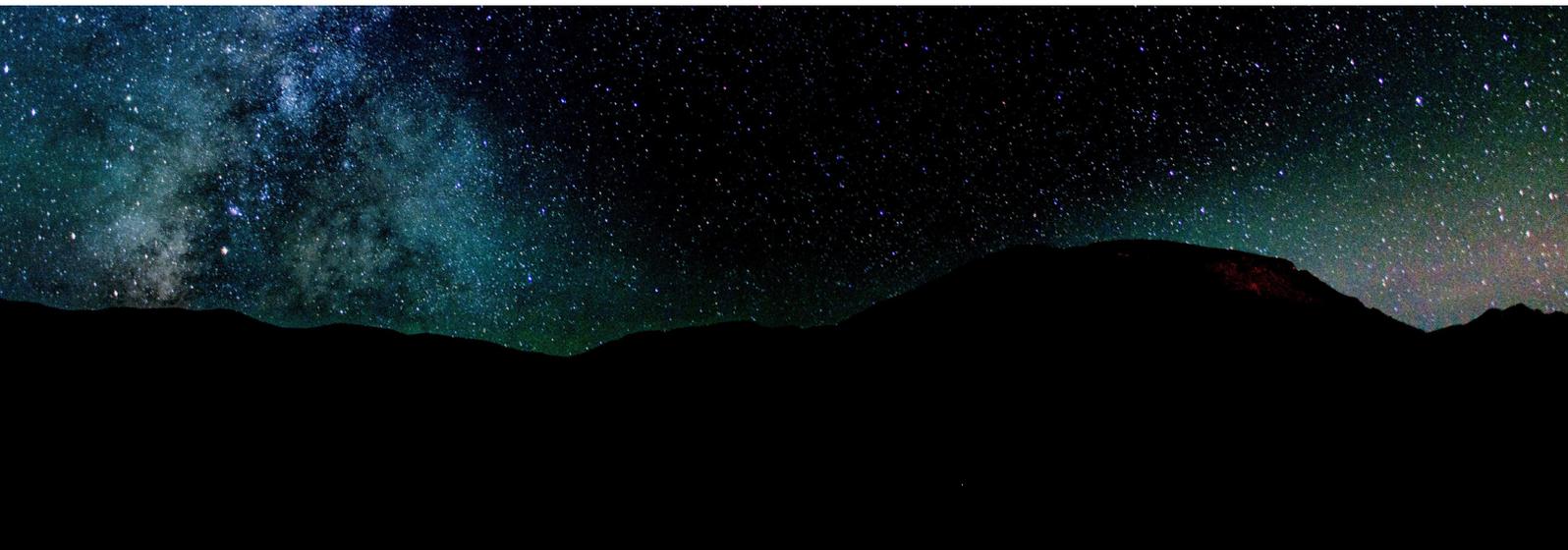
OUR VISION: TAGATA SA'ILIMALO

Tagata Sa'ilimalo (*tagata = people or person, sa'ilimalo = pursuit of success*) is a new vision of Pacific disability in Aotearoa and also a term of identity to replace "Pacific disabled people, their families, and carers/supporters."

Tagata Sa'ilimalo is an aspirational vision of the pursuit of success underpinned by sheer determination and sustained by the collective vitality of Pacific peoples. It is a vision that reflects the hopes of the disability community to imagine better for their future. The Tagata Sa'ilimalo vision is inclusive of all Pacific peoples in Aotearoa and all disability types. The name derives from a Samoan phrase, but we anticipate additional names will be developed in other Pacific languages to describe the same underlying vision.

The origin of the name is a phrase used to acknowledge an individual or group's victory or achievement:

malo le sa'ili malo, malo le finau, malo le tauivi. In English this means: well done for pursuing success; well done for raising and arguing the point; well done for persevering with the struggle. This expression allows those who have witnessed or taken part in the successful journey to recognise everything it took to get there.





Navigating the future. Guided by the past.

tofamamao.com

9 November 2022

Communicated by Tōfā Mamao National Executive Officer, Tunumafono Faamoetaulua Ava Faamoe MNZM

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Executive summary

In just over two decades the social movement of tagata sa'ilimalo (Pacific disabled people and their families/nofo-a-kainga and carers/supporters/tautua soifua in Aotearoa) has emerged from its previous state of invisibility in the mainstream disability sector to become a force of influence in Pacific disability development. Further momentum is now occurring under the stewardship of the Tōfā Mamao Collective, a grassroots collective and proudly independent national non-profit led entirely by tagata sa'ilimalo.

Today, the outcomes for tagata sa'ilimalo remain stubbornly suboptimal. Despite ongoing transformation in the disability sector, there still exists an uneasy fit between the disability service system and the needs of tagata sa'ilimalo. For example, in comparison to the general population, tagata sa'ilimalo underuse formal services, overuse informal home supports and are more likely to opt out of the disability service system altogether.

This situation is not surprising. The disability sector is part of a universal public system – it is a sector built around the needs of a nuclear family with individualistic aspirations that is less able to accommodate the collectivist needs of those that rely on extended family and community support to sustain their daily lives. In doing so, it misses opportunities to build on existing strengths and resources of the Pacific community.

The opportunity that lies in front of Tōfā Mamao to help reverse this state is significant. Firstly, major health and disability reforms are swinging the focus of both sectors away from service-systems toward person-systems, daily lives and wellbeing. These reforms bring to the fore the importance of the cultural context of home settings and the ability to tailor services around tagata sa'ilimalo. The disability reforms especially provide the chance to build a developmental springboard that merges the flexibility of the sector's Enabling Good Lives approach and the Whānau Ora Programme's holistic focus on whānau wellbeing and collectivism.

Secondly, Aotearoa now has a greater grasp of the implications of major diversification of its population. This is best expressed in the whole of government Living Standards Framework that now recognises that it is not only the wellbeing of individuals that is important but also the wellbeing of collectives. This is a groundbreaking shift that paves the way for redesigning disability community-based services around the collectivist cultural preferences of the Pacific community.

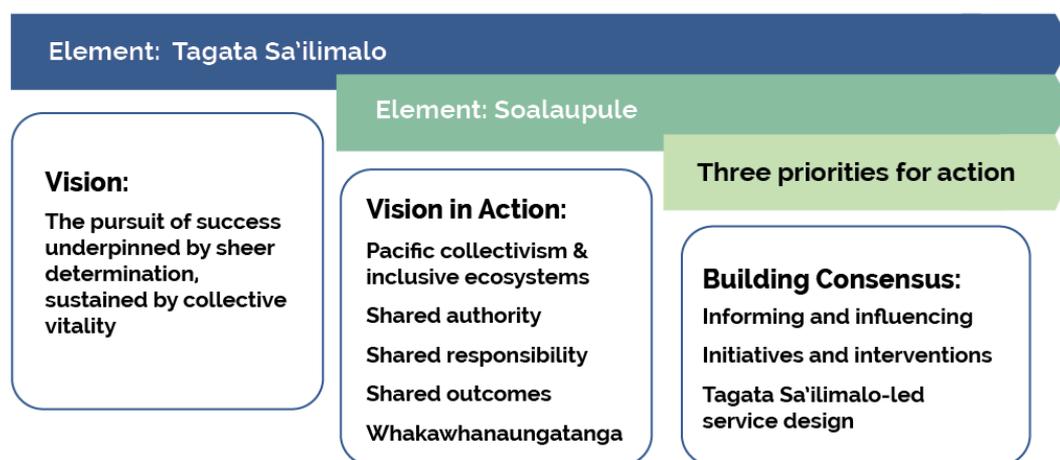
And thirdly, the Pacific community today is a matured and dynamic force for wellbeing within Aotearoa. The unique way in which the Pacific community works was vividly illustrated in the sharp turnaround in the poor testing and vaccination rates of Pacific people during the pandemic in 2021 once a partnership between government and the Pacific community was forged. The Pacific mode of community mobilisation can be viewed as an 'ecosystem'—a resilient network, tied by common values and motivated by a shared purpose to improve community wellbeing. Deploying this 'for-Pacific-by-Pacific' ecosystem provides the cultural context to break the cycle of poor outcomes for tagata sa'ilimalo.

But in building a pathway to success, Tōfā Mamao has had to confront the weak policy understanding of collectivism as it applies to Pacific people, especially in home and community settings. Māori have forged the path in addressing this issue, but Pacific people, and therefore tagata sa'ilimalo, are still trapped within universal and largely individualistic frameworks.

This paper argues that current health and disability reforms require greater policy attention to the collectivistic needs of Pacific people to realistically address the equity and wellbeing objectives being pursued. It outlines the role that Tōfā Mamao is playing to support systems change and introduces the Tagata Sa'ilimalo Strategic Framework to guide these efforts.

This Tagata Sa'ilimalo Strategic Framework is summarised in Diagram 1 below as Tagata Sa'ilimalo (the vision), Soalaupule (the vision-in-action), and three priorities for action.

Diagram 1: Tagata Sa'ilimalo Strategic Framework – Pacific collectivism driving tagata sa'ilimalo wellbeing



Introduction

The Tōfā Mamao Collective is a proudly independent national non-profit led entirely by tagata sa'ilimalo, which is the term now used to refer to Pacific disabled people and their families/nofo-a-kainga and carers/supports/tautua soifua in Aotearoa.

Since 2020, Tōfā Mamao has worked to reframe the narrative regarding everyday lives of tagata sa'ilimalo. To that end the Collective has developed a movement centred around its vision and identity that is uniquely Pacific. Both the vision and identity grow from the Pacific worldview of collectivism. The vision is timely because of the unprecedented opportunity available through major health and disability reforms and gowing national policy imperatives to support collective wellbeing.

This Strategic Paper outlines its vision (Tagata Sa'ilimalo), its vision-in-action (Soalaupule) as well as three priorities for action. The first two elements (vision and vision-in-action) make up the Tagata Sa'ilimalo Strategic Framework. Each element uses as outcome domains the relevant Te Tai Ōhanga The Treasury Living Standards Framework wellbeing domains.

Tōfā Mamao means 'navigating the future, guided by the past'. In this paper, in *Guided by the Past*, we first describe the imperatives for the first two elements (the vision and vision-in-action), followed by *Navigating the Future*, which outlines direction for these two elements. Then in *Soalaupule* we outline the three priority areas of Tōfā Mamao-related activity. The final section provides a

summary and conclusions, with recommendations for policymakers, service providers and others on ways to support the foundational efforts of tagata sa'ilimalo.

Tagata Sa'ilimalo – a vision for success

| Element | Description | Living Standards Framework Outcome Domain |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| Vision: Tagata Sa'ilimalo | Reframes Aotearoa Pacific disability aspirations and identity Relational, collectivistic, tagata sa'ilimalo-led | LSF1 Cultural capability & belonging LSF1 Subjective wellbeing LSF1 Work, care & volunteering LSF1 Engagement & voice LSF1 Knowledge & skills |

Guided by the past – the journey of tagata sa'ilimalo leadership

The disability reforms of Aotearoa New Zealand in the 1990s introduced major changes long fought for by disabled people and their supporters around the world to remove discriminatory barriers to their full participation in society. This was a transformational shift that recognised the rights of disabled people to live ordinary lives as others do.

In the early 2000s tagata sa'ilimalo emerged as a distinct leadership group within the disability advocacy movement. Until then, tagata sa'ilimalo were largely invisible in the mainstream disability sector and their perspective was missing from a mainly Pākehā-led advocacy movement. The notion of 'disability' was new to Pacific people and there was little interest in adopting this as a form of social identity, but poor disability outcomes demanded a Pacific presence in the sector.

The emergence of tagata sa'ilimalo leadership was part of the larger development, in the 1990s, of a strong Pacific health and disability sector capability of administrators, practitioners, academics, service providers and community leaders. That capability arose as part of a sector drive to address the poor health outcomes of Māori and Pacific peoples. An important alliance existed at this time between Māori as tangata whenua and Pacific peoples, communities with longstanding historical kinship ties and a common collectivistic and whānau-centred worldview. Through this alliance, Pacific peoples benefitted from the gains made by Māori in promoting Hauora Māori approaches.

Despite transformation in the disability sector, the fit between the disability service system and the needs of tagata sa'ilimalo remains uneasy. For example, in comparison to the general population, tagata sa'ilimalo underuse formal services, overuse informal supports and are more likely to opt out of the disability system altogether. The tagata sa'ilimalo perspective is crucial for understanding these trends and implications.

In charting its future, Tōfā Mamao sought to tell a new story. Its vision, outlined below, is aspirational and authentic, designed to motivate tagata sa'ilimalo to steer their own collective futures. By independently following this course, Tōfā Mamao was able to bypass the constraints of

a disability system largely framed by universality, individual rights and Western values.

Navigating the future - reframing the vision

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Tagata sa'ilimalo are one and many. Tagata sa'ilimalo refers not only to an individual, but also to the family and community who surround them.

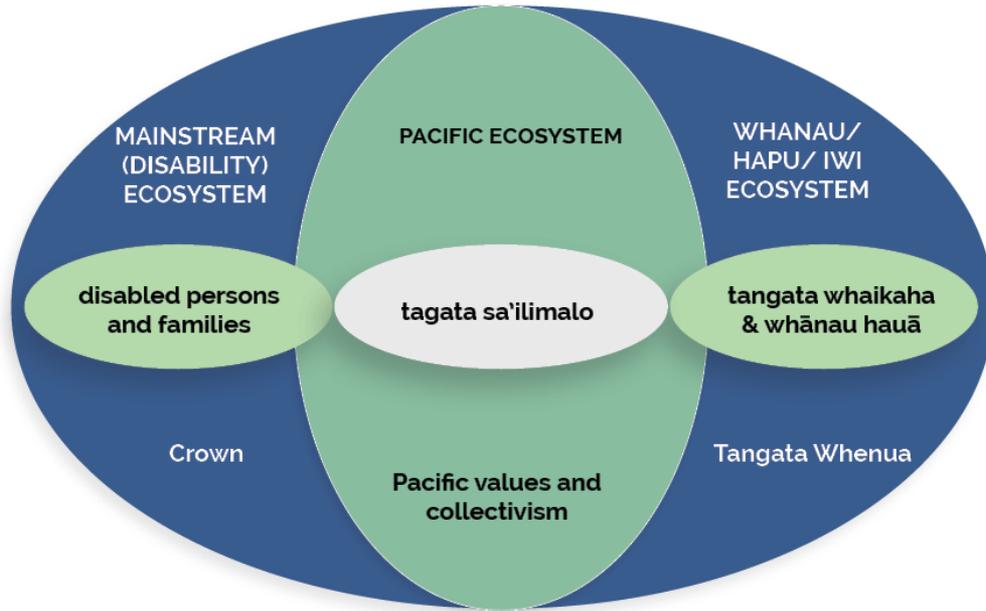
Tagata Sa'ilimalo is an aspirational vision of the pursuit of success underpinned by sheer determination and sustained by the collective vitality of Pacific peoples. It is a vision that reflects the hopes of the Pacific disability community to imagine better for their future. The Tagata Sa'ilimalo vision is inclusive of all Pacific peoples in Aotearoa and all disability types. The name derives from a Samoan phrase, but we anticipate additional names will be developed in other Pacific languages to describe the same underlying vision.

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The vision connects tagata sa'ilimalo to their Pacific community in Aotearoa New Zealand. The vision is important because for the first time it frames the experience of tagata sa'ilimalo in terms of Pacific identity, the Pacific worldview and collectivist ways of living. Disability is a subset of this identity. The advent of this vision also recognises the vibrancy of the Aotearoa Pacific community and the growing confidence to steer a pathway that allows them to flourish as communities.

Diagram 2 below depicts the Tagata Sa'ilimalo vision-in-action, Soalaupule, shown as three inclusive ecosystems: the Pacific ecosystem aligned to the mainstream ecosystem, which universally serves all disabled people, and to the Māori ecosystem of tangata whaikaha, underscoring the relationship between tangata whenua and tāngata o Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa – peoples of the Pacific.

Diagram 2: Tagata Sa'ilimalo and Soalaupule – inclusive ecosystems



Soalaupule – vision-in-action

| Element | Description | Living Standards Framework Outcome Domain |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| Vision in Action Soalaupule | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pacific collectivism – using an ecosystem lens • Inclusive ecosystems and whakawhanaungatanga as a way of working • Advances a for-Pacific-by-Pacific competency and approach to address equity, wellbeing • Builds natural support capacity of tagata sa'ilimalo and Pacific communities | LSF1 Cultural capability & belonging LSF1 Knowledge and skills LSF2 Families and households LSF2 International connections LSF3 Social cohesion |

Guided by the past – the ‘wicked problem’ reality

The existence of a vision alone is not sufficient to tackle the ‘wicked problem’ nature of the three intertwined challenges that are a barrier to tagata sa’ilimalo success: the impact of social determinants on disability outcomes, the barriers to collectivist living that are embedded in the disability system and suboptimal disability support usage.

The social determinants factor

The first challenge stems from inequalities that are greater for Pacific peoples than all other groups apart from Māori. This is an area given less attention in the past by a disability system more narrowly focused on the inequalities of being disabled. However, research has demonstrated the strong influence of social and economic factors on health, with studies suggesting that social determinants account for between 30-55% of health outcomes.¹ For Pacific peoples, and therefore tagata sa’ilimalo, disparities are reflected in poor outcomes across several indicators:

“a greater proportion of Pacific peoples than NZ Europeans and the total population report financial and housing challenges that impact on their well-being. 24% of Pacific peoples (8.5% of Europeans) report not having enough money to meet their everyday needs, 40% (18% of Europeans) live in homes that are always cold, and 10% (5% of Europeans) report having problems with damp and mould.”²

This challenge is one where public policy too often has failed to grasp the complexity of social problems and assumed that citizens are passive recipients of government actions.³ It is a challenge that the Health New Zealand reforms are tackling, showing the understanding that major gains in equity and wellbeing cannot be achieved without a holistic approach and more effective collaboration with communities. In turn the impact of this challenge suggests the need for a more unified approach to funding, commissioning and service delivery.

The impact of collectivistic preferences

The second area less discussed until recently in the policy arena may be even more profound in its influence. Pacific culture, as with Māori culture, is largely collectivistic in nature. Although the peoples of the Pacific are diverse, a common theme in their worldviews is that values are highly relational, elevating the interests of the family and community alongside the individual. For tagata sa’ilimalo, being Pacific is a primary source of identity – being disabled may only be a secondary consideration.

In contrast, the disability system evolved within a more individualistic cultural frame, adopting a ‘one-size fits all’ approach to policy and service design. This was further reinforced by the United

¹ World Health Organization, [Social Determinants of Health](#), [accessed 31 July 2022].

² Ryan D, Grey C and Mischewski B, [Tofa sa’ili, A Review of Health Evidence about Health equity for Pacific Peoples in New Zealand](#), 2019, p 4.

³ Trischler J and Charles M, The Application of a Service Ecosystems Lens to Public Policy Analysis and Design: Exploring the Frontiers, *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 2018, 38(1):19-35.

Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2008) and its predominant focus on the individual, a situation that is increasingly being challenged, especially by Indigenous peoples.

The spectrum between individualistic and collectivistic cultural values was identified by the Social Policy and Evaluation Research Unit as one of the key dimensions for researchers, policymakers and providers to consider when trying to understand family/whānau wellbeing.⁴⁻⁵ Their research spotlighted the different emphases that the two orientations employ across universal family and household functions.

In practice this means that a sector built around assumptions of a nuclear family with individualistic aspirations is less able to accommodate the collectivistic needs of a community with larger families that rely on extended family and community support to sustain their daily lives.

For example, tagata sa'ilimalo are typically embedded in a network of household members, extended family and community, who provide critical support of all kinds, including financial, logistical, social, emotional, spiritual and cultural. Building the resilience and value of this vital resource—which tagata sa'ilimalo tend to choose over formal supports—is largely ignored as a public investment. Targeted support of this informal workforce, including through training, equipping and resourcing, has great potential for improving the wellbeing of tagata sa'ilimalo.

Significantly, Aotearoa is now updating its population settings to more effectively reflect the major diversification of its population. In October 2021, Te Tai Ōhunga The Treasury released its revised whole of government Living Standards Framework (LSF2021) to “better reflect children’s wellbeing and culture, including being more compatible with wellbeing as understood in te ao Māori and by Pacific Peoples.”⁶ There is now recognition that the wellbeing of groups and collectives is important alongside the wellbeing of individuals. The Living Standards Framework sits alongside the He Ara Wairoa for a Māori perspective on wellbeing, and Lalanga Fou for a Pacific perspective on wellbeing.

Suboptimal disability support usage

Social inequalities and collectivistic preferences provide an important contextual backdrop to the third challenge, the suboptimal disability support usage of tagata sa'ilimalo. Research shows that people with individualistic preferences are more likely to have higher expectations of services and to exert their needs for a higher level of service response. People with collectivistic preferences are more likely to feel daunted by the power imbalance and less inclined to assert their needs where these are not being met. As a result, this group has lower expectations of service.⁷ This in part helps explain the greater levels of system participation of people with individualistic preferences and, in this case, the tendency of tagata sa'ilimalo to opt out of disability support or accept lesser services.

⁴ Social Policy Evaluation and Research Unit (Superu), [Families and Whānau Status Report](#), 2016.

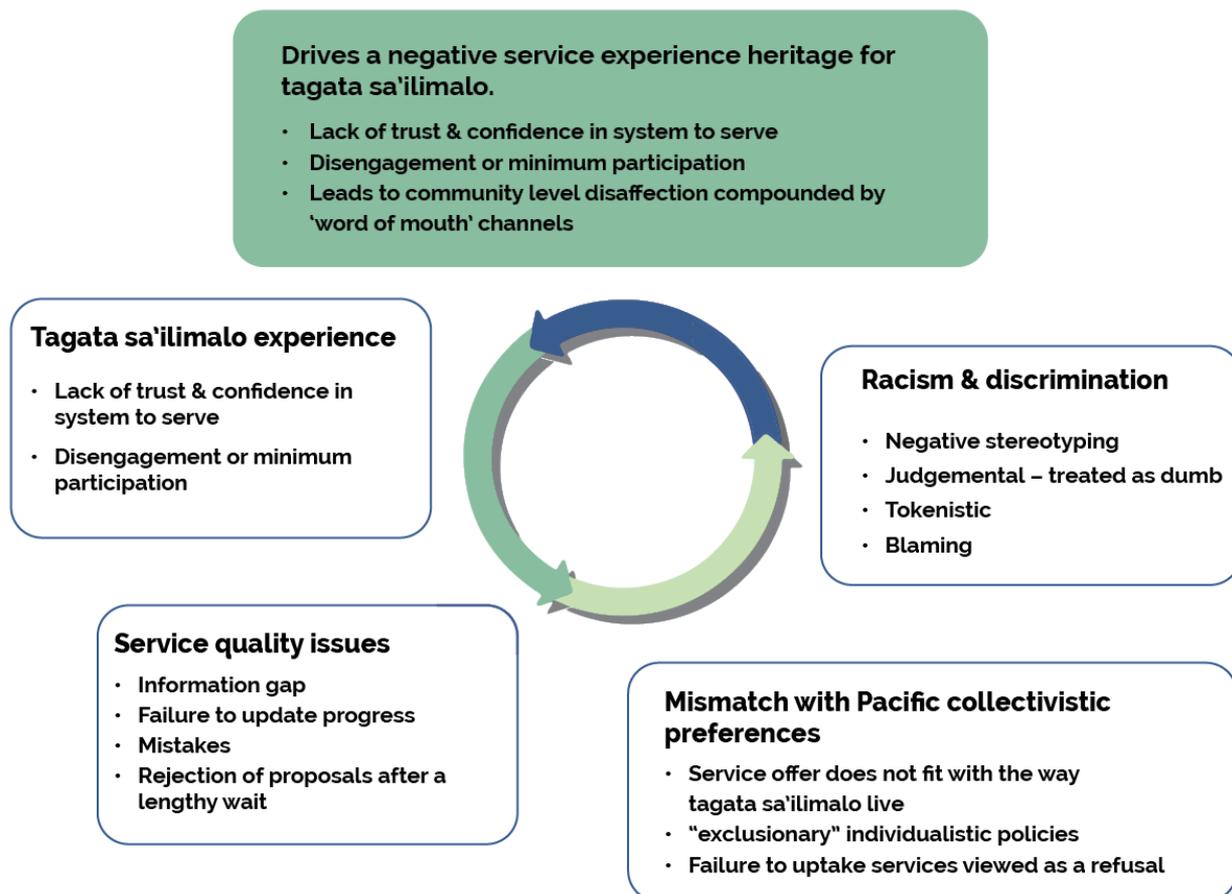
⁵ Social Policy Evaluation and Research Unit (Superu), [Families: universal functions, culturally diverse values](#), 2017.

⁶ The Treasury, [The Living Standards Framework \(LSF\) 2021](#), 2021.

⁷ Donthu N and Yoo B, [Cultural Influences on Service Quality Expectations](#), *Journal of Service Research*, 1998, 2(2):178-186.

Further insight into issues of poor participation is found in the work of the Tangaroa Disability Collective, of which Tōfā Mamao is the tagata sa'ilimalo partner. Detail on this project is outlined further in this report but it is useful to highlight here their findings from the Ola Manuia Model of Disability Support Prototype (subsequently renamed the Tagata Sa'ilimalo Model of Disability Support Prototype). This Prototype centred on 58 tagata sa'ilimalo and subsequent talanoa with 16 participants as well as 6 connectors.

Diagram 3: Negative service experience cycle of tagata sa'ilimalo



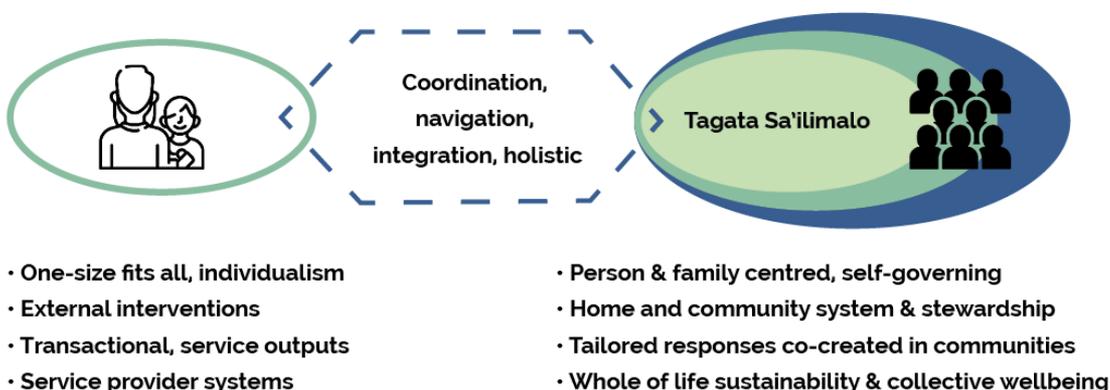
The systemic nature of the disaffection portrayed in Diagram 3 represents public and private 'value loss' as opposed to value creation, which evidence reveals stems from absence of information, an absence of trust, mistakes, an inability to serve, an absence of clear expectations and blaming. The extent of value loss can be viewed as value destruction if this state persists over time.

That is why the opportunity in current health and disability reforms is so important. The focus is now on the person and their family, community systems and their potential for creating value as active participants; there is a commitment to addressing equity, and policy support is growing for collectivistic approaches to wellbeing.

The potential of the Enabling Good Lives approach

The rollout of a new national disability support approach, Enabling Good Lives (EGL), offers a unique opportunity for tagata sa'ilimalo self-determination. This is a new approach that provides greater choice and flexibility to disabled people over the resources that help them lead ordinary lives. This flexible approach shifts the focus away from building systems around particular services to instead supporting a person-centred system of disabled people and their families. As such it offers tagata sa'ilimalo the opportunity to tailor service approaches around their specific needs. Diagram 4 illustrates key points of this shift from a service provider system orientation towards person systems and home settings.

Diagram 4: A Service Paradigm Shift - A focus on home settings and person systems



The main priorities of EGL are to improve natural and universally available supports. Natural supports are the ordinary family and community relationships that support people in their everyday lives, as opposed to the formal supports offered by government-funded services. Universally available supports are those government-funded services intended to supplement natural supports.

Consistent with contemporary person-centred approaches, EGL includes the concept of an ecosystem as well as a Kaitūhono/Connector role to help navigate barriers to participation. The EGL approach therefore provides an opportunity to tailor supports within the cultural system and preferences of tagata sa'ilimalo. Māori are positioning their engagement with EGL consistent with their whānau/hapu and collectivistic approach.

EGL shares some similarities with the Whānau Ora programme, although that service differs because of its collectivistic orientation. In Whānau Ora, whānau alongside individuals are placed at the centre of decision making on wellbeing.

The same principle of collectivism has yet to be applied to the Pacific community. Instead the EGL framework describes the ecosystem concept as part of the Kaitūhono/Connector role, viewing this role as the filter and method of engaging the community. This placement sidelines the already established and central role of the community for tagata sa'ilimalo, in the process limiting resource

management to a single employee and their organisation. It also reinforces historic assumptions around individualistic aspirations and values, where there is less reliance on family and communities for support, thereby underplaying the importance of community building.

The failure to pick up on the cultural dynamics of Pacific people can in part be attributed to the scope of EGL evaluations prior to the national rollout. These evaluations occurred outside the larger metropolitan areas where Pacific people mainly live (Auckland, 63.9%; Wellington, 11.2%).⁸

In general, the EGL evaluation results and feedback from participants reinforce the value of the Enabling Good Lives approach. The Kaitūhono or navigator/facilitator role helped disabled people improve their access to supports and services. New innovations emerged, and in the Mana Whaikaha prototype the government liaison role had some success navigating systems barriers.

But the gaps in participation in the EGL evaluation projects suggest that the underlying patterns of suboptimal usage by tagata sa'ilimalo are not yet understood. Instead, the approach appears to reinforce individualistic preferences and lifestyles. For example, the EGL Mana Whaikaha prototype (disability transformation focus) highlighted that those who were used to working with the disability system found the approach easy to use, but those who were not—the 'hard to reach'—struggled or opted out. In addition, the Connectors were soon overwhelmed by the workload in the face of complexity, and this became a significant issue. The potential of this role was also limited if the 'ecosystem' surrounding the role was inadequate, or if staff turnover occurred.

The ideal approach advanced by Tōfā Mamao is one that exploits the synergy of Pacific collectivism, viewed through an ecosystem lens, combined with the philosophy and flexibility of Enabling Good Lives. This approach provides a way to simultaneously tackle the major barriers to tagata sa'ilimalo success outlined in this paper.

The value of the Pacific ecosystem to support tagata sa'ilimalo

Grasping the significance of the ecosystem concept is fundamental to advancing a person-system approach. Service 'systems', or ecosystems, can be viewed as a resilient network of people and organisations that are connected by shared values, norms, purposes, institutions and other context, and reciprocal resource exchange and co-creation (knowledge, skills, money, services, goods, technology, time, energy, etc.).⁹ They operate across three levels: micro, meso and macro, in which a dynamic interplay of players and resources are mobilised behind a common purpose. In this respect, service ecosystems differ from the networks employed as an extension of service provider systems networks because of their collaborative, contextual and systemic nature.¹⁰

Understanding the way in which tagata sa'ilimalo live, their aspirations and how value is created in their lives is central because it allows for the determination of the most suitable configuration of

⁸ Stats NZ, [2018 Census](#).

⁹ Vargo SL and Lush R, An Overview of Service-Dominant Logic, in Lush R and Vargo SL (eds) *The SAGE Handbook of Service-Dominant Logic*, 2018.

¹⁰ Koskela-Huotari K and Vargo SL, [Institutions as resource context](#), *Journal of Service Theory and Practice*, 2016, 26(2):163-178.

resources for individuals and for collective groups to integrate and operate on. This understanding moves attention beyond service delivery to how appropriate stewardship can address specific problems.¹¹ In their updated Living Standards Framework, Te Tai Ōhanga The Treasury identified the importance of institutions, another term for ecosystems, as the basis for driving prosperity and wellbeing.

Of relevance, the hallmarks of a dynamic community ecosystem are found in the unique way in which a matured Aotearoa Pacific community organises itself. Pacific peoples make up one of the largest ethnic groups of Aotearoa and are further distinguished by their regional origins as tāngata o Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa – peoples of the Pacific. It is a community united around Pacific values and collectivism with a strong sense of belonging and identity. Family is at the centre, where community activities across households and communities support collective wellbeing. The ‘resourcefulness’¹² of Pacific collectivism is central, that is, the ability of a discrete community to convert private and public resources into Pacific community and public value. For example, the role of keystone actors is influential in Pacific development. These are the people and organisations familiar with multiple systems that are key to enabling flows of resources to and from the Pacific community.

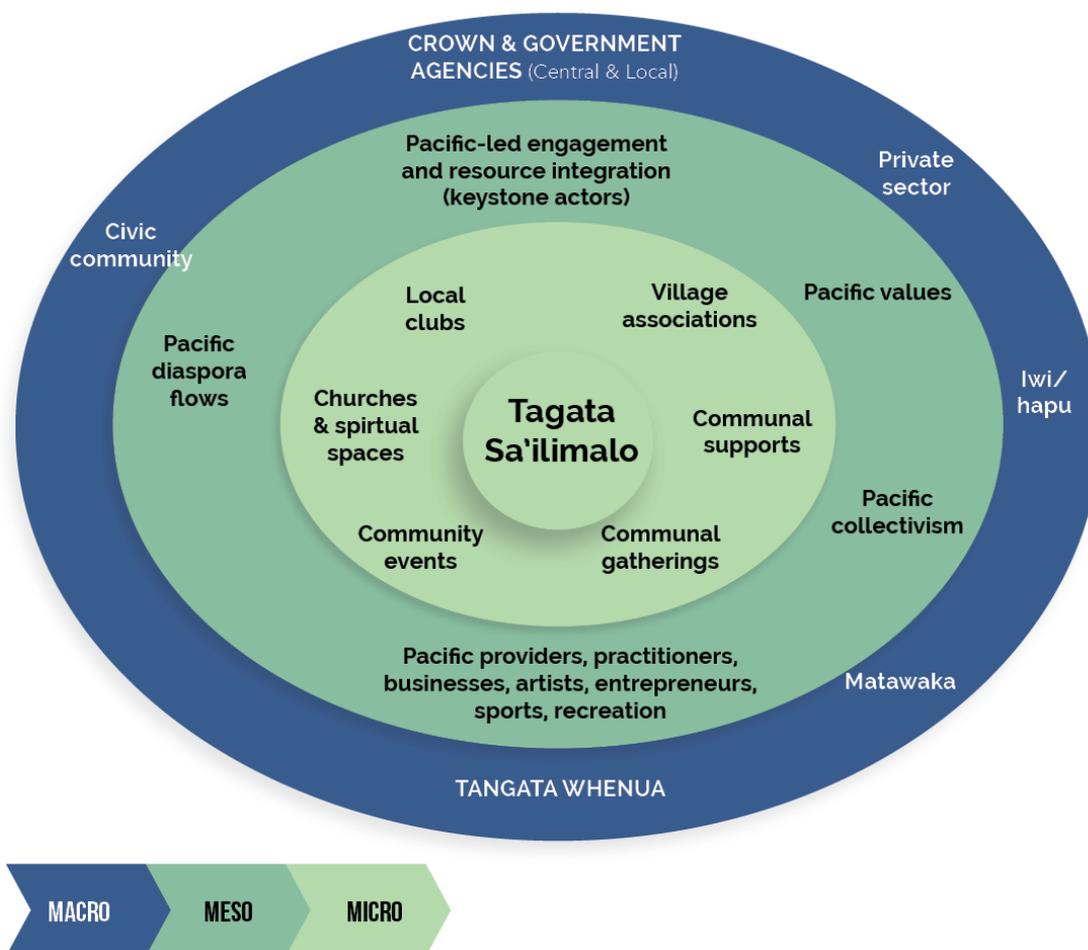
Diagram 5 views Pacific collectivism through an ecosystem lens, highlighting components of participation across the micro (tagata sa’ilimalo household), meso (nofo-a-kainga and community support) and macro (more widely available resources and engagement).

Aotearoa was able to witness the force of the Pacific ecosystem during the pandemic in 2021 through the remarkable turnaround that occurred in testing and vaccination rates once the government forged a working partnership with the Pacific community. Here, spontaneous community activity arose, joining forces with government targeted initiatives to create a uniquely Pacific example of communitarianism. Direct public investment in community organising is also evident in public health programmes such as those targeting childhood vaccinations, lifestyle programmes, nutrition and breast cancer.

¹¹ Viswanathan M, Sridharan S, Ritchie R, Venugopal S and Jung K. Marketing Interactions in Subsistence Marketplaces: A Bottom-Up Approach to Designing Public Policy. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 2012, 31(2):159-177.

¹² Koskela-Huotari K and Vargo SL, [Institutions as resource context](#), *Journal of Service Theory and Practice*, 2016, 26(2):163-178.

Diagram 5: Pacific collectivism as a Pacific ecosystem



At the heart of the Pacific ecosystem is the cultural capability that permeates macro, meso and micro levels. The proliferation of Pacific service providers, Pacific-led collaborations, practitioners and community members with the linguistic proficiency, network reach, trusted relationships and knowledge of public systems all facilitate effective targeting of resources.

Outside the public sector, ecosystem development has been enriched by a younger population more likely to be born in Aotearoa and the strengthening legacy of kinship ties with Māori. This is driving a dynamic proliferation of arts, sports, recreational and entrepreneurial activity that has also helped bridge the gap between 'mainstream' and Pacific communities.

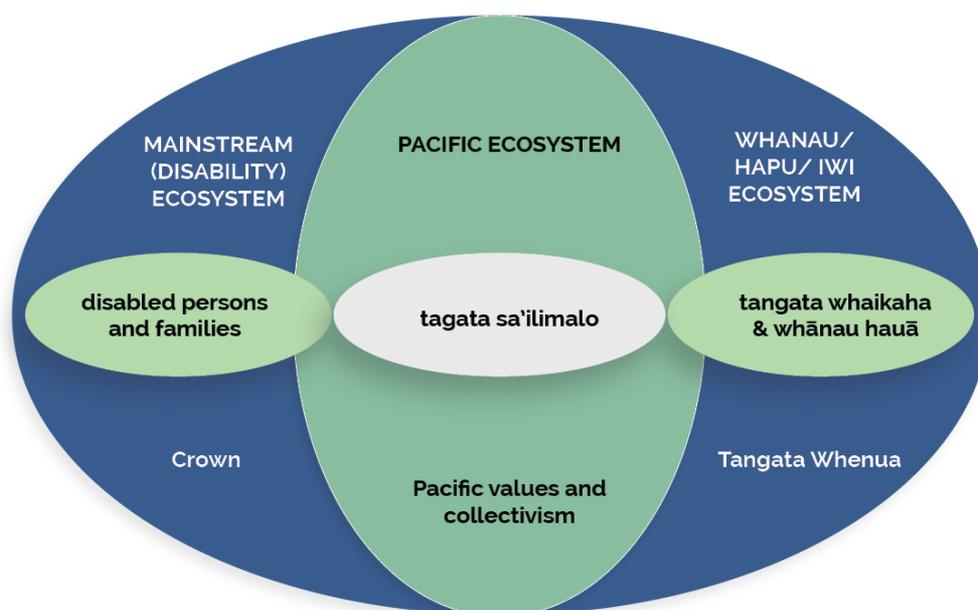
Acknowledging and supporting this Pacific way of working can ensure the EGL approach also works for tagata sa'ilimalo. Instead of expecting the Kāituhono/Connector role to embody the ecosystem, it should be recognised that tagata sa'ilimalo already operate within an ecosystem. This reinforces that the community system of tagata sa'ilimalo is now at the centre and gives greater opportunity to address the disability and wider inequalities limiting tagata sa'ilimalo success.

Navigating the future – Soalaupule

Soalaupule (shared authority) is the name of the Tagata Sa'ilimalo vision-in-action that will guide changing practices. Soalaupule is a group decision-making process in which participants share both the decision and accountability for the outcomes. Soalaupule allows self-determination while intertwining the lives of everyone who takes part.

The Soalaupule model highlighted in Diagram 2 in the section on *Navigating the future* and again in Diagram 6 is a systems representation centred around tagata sa'ilimalo and their natural supports embedded in the Pacific ecosystem. This ecosystem overlaps with the mainstream disability (Crown and universal services) ecosystem and the tangata whenua ecosystem centred on whānau/hapu wellbeing to form an inclusive ecosystem setting.

Diagram 6: Soalaupule vision-in-action – inclusive ecosystems



Soalaupule is underpinned by the Pacific worldview, the Pacific values that anchor the Aotearoa Pacific community – Aro'a (Love), Ola fetufaaki (Reciprocity), Magafaoa (Family), Soalaupule (Consensus), Piri'anga (Collectivism), Tapuakiga (Spirituality) and Fakalilifu (Respect). Pacific collectivism is a central feature of day-to-day support.¹³

Soalaupule has termed the Pacific Collectivist approach the Pacific ecosystem. In those areas where the predominant context for supports for tagata sa'ilimalo is the Pacific community, the Pacific ecosystem becomes the primary reference point. The Pacific ecosystem provides the

¹³ Ministry for Pacific Peoples, [Pacific Wellbeing Strategy](#), 2021.

contextual, systemic and collaborative approach. Through appropriate stewardship of a for-Pacific-by-Pacific approach, it provides the basis for government community-based partnerships at the local and meso level to address both the aspirations and challenges of tagata sa'ilimalo as part of the wider Pacific community. Examples of Pacific collaborations already exist within the health sector, and the Tangaroa Disability Collective is another example of Pacific-led development.

The Pacific ecosystem approach applied at the meso and macro levels features:

- *Resources* - a sizeable and discrete Aotearoa Pacific community, unified by common values with the commitment to attract and convert private and public resources to benefit Pacific wellbeing. A reciprocal and self-reinforcing approach able to straddle multiple systems to build the pool of Pacific capability and the cultural capacity of all.
- *Applied Pacific knowledge and skills* - the combination of embodied knowledge and skills, linguistic proficiency, working Pacific worldview and trusted relationships. This competence enables reach, quick problem-solving and innovation within Pacific communities.
- *Collaborative capacity* - established relationships within mainstream and Pacific communities that provide the basis for cooperation and the ability to leverage Pacific channels of communication with households and communities. This feature includes the value to Pacific communities and all of Aotearoa created through Pacific diaspora flows that support regional social and economic wellbeing.
- *Integration* - a holistic approach that underpins the formal and informal coordination of Pacific providers, practitioners and other Pacific-led activity aimed at providing an integrated response to inequalities.

At the micro level, deployment of the Pacific ecosystem creates the cultural frame around the tagata sa'ilimalo experience, one where participants feel affirmed and motivated to shape with others meaningful solutions to their daily and ongoing lives.

Three priorities for action

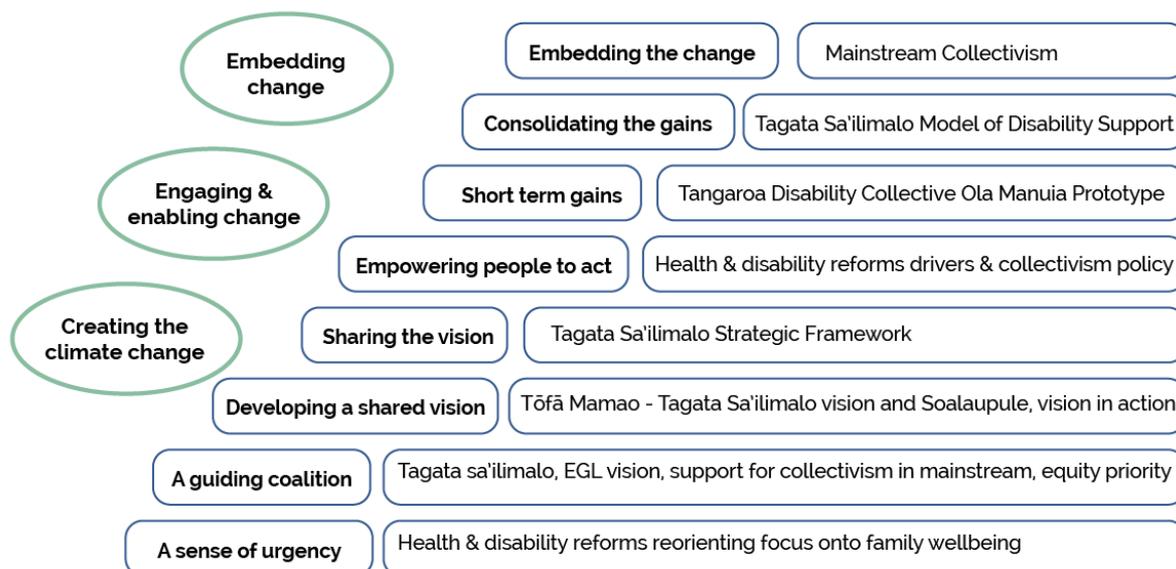
To advance the new concept of tagata sa'ilimalo outlined in this paper and discussion on Pacific collectivism, Tōfā Mamao is engaged in activities aimed at supporting systems change. A summary is provided below of key priorities for action. Further information is provided on the Tangaroa Disability Model of Support's prototype because of the significance of this project as a working approach of Soalaupule.

The main thrust of activities at the national level is to contribute to the formative and evolving conversation and policy development. The timing of reforms and new collectivistic policy means that Tōfā Mamao is able to provide active leadership as part of the change process to update the new mainstream settings of Aotearoa to reflect a more diverse population and society.

At the regional and operational level, Tōfā Mamao is engaged in a number of targeted activities designed to translate its vision into action and practical steps for delivering that vision. This is occurring through collaborative projects in the health and disability sector and with other institutions to build the body of knowledge and practice of tagata sa'ilimalo. Diagram 7 highlights the role Tōfā

Mamao and tagata sa'ilimalo are playing in supporting collectivism as a driver of mainstream wellbeing.

Diagram 7: The role of Tōfā Mamao and tagata sa'ilimalo in collectivism policy development



Current priorities

The following table outlines the current priorities at the national and regional, policy and operational levels under the Tagata Sa'ilimalo Strategic framework

| Priority | Informing & Influencing | Service Design | Initiatives & Interventions |
|----------------|--|---|--|
| Purpose | Tagata sa'ilimalo perspective, Pacific collectivism | Tagata sa'ilimalo-led service design | Build capacity of tagata sa'ilimalo |
| Key Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whaikaha Ministry of Disabled People and Disability Reforms - Health NZ & Te Mana Hauora Māori reforms - UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - New Zealand Treasury (wellbeing focus) - Productivity Commission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tangaroa Disability Collective's Ola Manuia Model of Disability Support Project - Health and Wellbeing models – prototype engagement - Iwi Māori and tagata whaikaha/whānau hauā/tagata sa'ilimalo & Pacific engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Natural Support innovations and community collaborations - Enabling Good Lives skills building - Tagata sa'ilimalo body of knowledge - Pacific ecosystem development – University of Auckland |

Tangaroa Disability Collective and Ola Manuia Disability Model of Support

In late 2020, government Covid-19 resilience funding was released to Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, the epicentre of the pandemic. The disability funding was awarded to the Tangaroa Disability Collective (Tangaroa), made up of Pacific Homecare Services (Lead Contractor), Tōfā Mamao Collective and PIASS Trust (tagata sa'ilimalo partner), Taikura Trust (Needs Assessment and Service Coordination Service) and Vaka Tautua (health and disability provider). The funding was used to develop the Ola Manuia Model of Disability Support Prototype that informed development of the final model, the Tagata Sa'ilimalo Model of Disability Support.

Tangaroa used an approach for the prototype that combined Enabling Good Lives principles embedded in Pacific values, an approach determined as the most effective way to build future resilience of tagata sa'ilimalo and Pacific communities in the face of further crises situations. The resilience focus means that an integrated approach to health, disability and wellbeing was undertaken with a spotlight on the role that wider inequalities play in restricting tagata sa'ilimalo success.

The partnership with tagata sa'ilimalo ensures their involvement is at the forefront of service design. Evaluation of the project was conducted by Moana Connect.

Evaluation of the Prototype was completed in 2022 and informed final development of the model of disability support, the Tagata Sa'ilimalo Model of Disability Support. This model applied the Tagata Sa'ilimalo Strategic Framework to its development.

As the project arose after the Enabling Good Lives evaluation prototypes and is funded through the Pacific Team of the Ministry of Health, it currently sits outside the Whaikaha Ministry of Disabled People's Enabling Good Lives evaluation framework. There is opportunity to address the gap in this programme's knowledge base as it relates to tagata sa'ilimalo and Pacific collectivism through engagement with this project.

Summary and conclusions

In 2020, when the Tōfā Mamao Collective introduced tagata sa'ilimalo as its vision and term for social identity, its goal was to provide an authentic disability platform from which to spark the changes required to improve their inclusion in the society of Aotearoa and within their own Pacific community, on their own terms. Central to their concerns was that disability outcomes for tagata sa'ilimalo remained stubbornly suboptimal. This showed in poor uptake of disability supports even in the face of greater flexibility and choice.

Investigations revealed that the underlying cause was twofold. Firstly, the disability system operates around individualistic and Western values with most services designed accordingly. This creates an immediate barrier for people with collectivistic preferences and perpetuates a reinforcing cycle – those who find the system familiar and responsive get more, and those with an uneasy fit, get less or opt out. This barrier is compounded by the impact of wider inequalities on tagata sa'ilimalo, a state not currently within the purview of the disability system.

The prospect of real change offered a sense of excitement to Tōfā Mamao and tagata sa'ilimalo. Both the health and disability reforms shift the focus of services away from service systems to homes and communities to address equity and wellbeing. That highlights the importance of cultural context and requires a collectivistic orientation to be successful. Māori have forged the path for recognising the importance of collectivism, but the policy approach to Pacific community still largely resides within the individualist universal domain.

The challenge for Tōfā Mamao was that to advance the needs of tagata sa'ilimalo meant addressing the needs of Pacific collectivism. This road has been eased since Te Tai Ōhanga The Treasury's release in October 2021 of its updated Living Standards Framework that recognises that the wellbeing of groups or collectives is important as well as the wellbeing of individuals.

Through this journey, Tōfā Mamao gained a greater insight into the way that Pacific collectivism works as a community ecosystem, a resilient network that is tied by common values and motivated by a shared purpose to improve community wellbeing.

Understanding Pacific collectivism through the ecosystem lens provides the collectivistic context for an updated for-Pacific-by-Pacific approach. Appropriately deployed through partnerships with government services and other communities, this approach allows Pacific people to be active in steering the private and public resources needed to drive Pacific wellbeing. It also provides a highly efficient way of targeting public resources so that these drive value creation as opposed to the value destruction that underpins persistent poor outcomes.

It is in the new disability approach of Enabling Good Lives that opportunity exists to apply the Pacific ecosystem as the context that surrounds tagata sa'ilimalo. Combining the flexibility of Enabling Good Lives with Pacific collectivism paves the way to create a cultural framework and the mobilisation of resources to build the natural supports of tagata sa'ilimalo, households and communities. It will also enable the programme to more easily coordinate with other agencies and sectors to access mainstream services and help address wider inequalities.

However, it is not realistic for Whaikaha Ministry of Disabled People's Enabling Good Lives approach to resolve the socio-economic inequalities that confront tagata sa'ilimalo through this channel alone. This paper argues that the extent of inequalities experienced by the Pacific community, and therefore tagata sa'ilimalo, are too great to be addressed through continued separation of government services. Instead, it proposes that these challenges can only be addressed through unified commissioning of Health New Zealand and Whaikaha Ministry of Disabled People funding, applying a Pacific collectivism and holistic approach to service delivery in order to break the cycle of inequalities impeding Pacific and tagata sa'ilimalo wellbeing. Through this approach, collaboration across the whole of government is brought to bear on tagata sa'ilimalo success and wellbeing for all.

Recommendations

| | |
|---|---|
| For all communities | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The vision Tagata Sa'ilimalo and term of identity tagata sa'ilimalo should be used when referring to Pacific disabled people to reinforce the collectivist values of Pacific people, the primary source of identity for tagata sa'ilimalo. |
| For policymakers, funders and commissioners | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pacific Collectivism, viewed through the lens of a community ecosystem, should be recognised in policy as an important mode for community mobilisation in equity, disability and community wellbeing initiatives and services. 2. A unified commissioning approach to the local needs of Pacific people, and thereby tagata sa'ilimalo, should be investigated, combining Health NZ and Whaikaha Ministry of Disabled People funding in order to provide a holistic response to inequalities and wellbeing. 3. The Enabling Good Lives approach of Whaikaha Ministry of Disabled People should build its policy and knowledge base with regards to tagata sa'ilimalo, drawing on the opportunity of the Tangaroa Disability Collective's prototype evaluation results and final report . 4. Policy relating to Enabling Good Lives should address the gaps in current service assumptions by incorporating Pacific collectivism as the community ecosystem and context for tagata sa'ilimalo. 5. The importance of collective wellbeing alongside individual wellbeing is reinforced in Aotearoa's progress reports on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. |

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